



Denise Juneau  
State Superintendent  
Montana Office of Public Instruction  
Helena, Montana  
[opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov)



# 2012

## GRADUATION AND DROPOUT REPORT



## Introduction

When Superintendent Denise Juneau took office in 2009, there were 2,423 students who dropped out of school, and Montana had a dropout rate of 5.1 percent. In today's economy, a quality public education is the key to economic prosperity for our young people. As parents, taxpayers, business owners and educators, Montanans cannot ignore the long-term economic consequences of students not graduating from high school. Understanding the economic consequences for individuals, communities and our state, Superintendent Juneau made dropout prevention a priority of the Office of Public Instruction.

### Graduation Matters Montana

Inspired by the early successes of the Graduation Matters Missoula initiative, Superintendent Juneau launched Graduation Matters Montana in 2010. Graduation Matters Montana is a statewide effort to ensure Montana students graduate from high school prepared for college and the workforce. Superintendent Juneau has set a goal to cut Montana's dropout rate in half to 2.5% by 2014.

Juneau's effort has drawn from national best practices and strategies that are working right here in Montana. Superintendent Juneau successfully advocated for raising Montana's English and math standards, engaged student voices through her Student Advisory Board, built public-private partnerships at the state and local level, worked with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to expand dual-credit opportunities and offer the ACT at no cost to every high school junior and launched a statewide "I pledge to graduate" campaign. Additionally, Juneau continues to advocate to the Montana Legislature to raise the legal dropout age from "age 16" to "age 18 or upon graduation," adopt anti-bullying legislation, and provide funding for schools to educate students older than 18 years of age.

Most importantly, Superintendent Juneau went to communities across the state to ask schools and businesses to join her in creating local Graduation Matters initiatives. To date, 28 communities have joined Superintendent Juneau's statewide effort by creating locally-designed Graduation Matters initiatives. More than 65% of high school students in our state are currently attending a school with a Graduation Matters initiative.



## Producing Results

The positive results of these state and local partnerships have been demonstrated in the data over the past two years. Since the launch of Graduation Matters Montana, the statewide dropout rate has been on the decline, and the graduation rate has gone up. Montana's high school dropout rate has decreased from 5.1 percent in 2009 to 4.1 percent in 2012, and the graduation rate has increased from 80.7 percent in 2009 to 83.9 percent in 2012. This means that 582 fewer students dropped out in 2012 than in 2009. The credit for this improvement belongs to the school leaders, teachers, community members, parents and students who have put in the work at the local level to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of students who may not have made it to graduation without their efforts.

	Dropouts	H.S. Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate	Completion Rate
2008-2009	2,423	5.1%	80.7%	81.9%
2009-2010	2,010	4.3%	80.2%	82.1%
2010-2011	1,975	4.3%	82.2%*	82.1%
2011-2012	1,841	4.1%	83.9%*	83.5%

## Definitions

**Dropout Rate:** Counts students who were enrolled in school on the date of the previous year's October enrollment count or at some time during the previous school year and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count.

**Graduation Rate:** Counts students who complete a district's graduation requirements in four years or less from the time an individual enrolled in the 9th grade or has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) allowing for more than four years to graduate.

**Completion Rate:** Counts students who complete the high school graduation requirements of a school district, including early graduates, during the previous school year, or complete the high school graduation requirements of a school district at the end of summer prior to the current school year.

**\*Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate:** The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. From the beginning of 9th grade, students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently "adjusted" by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the 9th grade and the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or pass away during that same period.



## Overview of the Data

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has been implementing improvements to its processes for tracking student achievement, including graduation and dropout rates, since 2007-08. These improvements include the implementation of a student information system, AIM-Achievement in Montana, which collects enrollment, demographic and program participation information at the individual student level. The advent of a statewide student information system using data verified and cleansed at the state and local level has improved the accuracy and reliability of Montana's dropout data. This report reflects the fifth year of collecting and verifying data using Montana's statewide student information system.



## Dropout Rate

The dropout rate counts students who were enrolled in school on the date of the previous year's October enrollment count or at some time during the previous school year and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count.

In this report for 2011-2012, the number of dropouts decreased by more than 130 students, and the rate also declined from 3.0 percent to 2.8 percent for grades 7-12. This is the lowest rate since the implementation of AIM. The high school dropout rate improved from 4.3 percent to 4.1 percent. More males than females dropped out, and the 12th grade continues to show the highest dropout rates.



The gap between male and female dropout rates increases as the grade increases. In the 9th grade, the male dropout rate is 2.7 percent and 2.1 percent for females. In 12th grade, the male dropout rate is 6.7 percent and the female dropout rate is 4.1 percent.

The dropout rate for American Indian students in grades 7-12 increased from 6.9 percent to 7.1 percent for the 2011-12 year. American Indian students show the highest dropout rates in the 11th grade.

2011-12 Montana Dropout Rate Summary			
	Dropout Rates	Dropout Count	Enrollment
<b>Overall Total (Grades 7-12)</b>	2.8%	1,841	65,652
<b>HS Total</b>	4.1%	1,801	43,980
Gr 12	5.4%	573	10,573
Gr 11	5.1%	537	10,601
Gr 10	3.6%	406	11,172
Gr 9	2.4%	285	11,634
<b>7 &amp; 8 Total</b>	0.2%	40	21,672
Gr 8	0.2%	25	10,806
Gr 7	0.1%	15	10,866
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	3.2%	1,085	33,869
Female	2.4%	756	31,783
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
American Indian	7.1%	491	6,943
Asian	0.8%	<10	638
Hispanic	4.0%	89	2,227
Black	3.3%	<10	614
Pacific Islander	2.4%	<10	164
White	2.2%	1,201	54,204
Other	3.6%	31	862

## Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

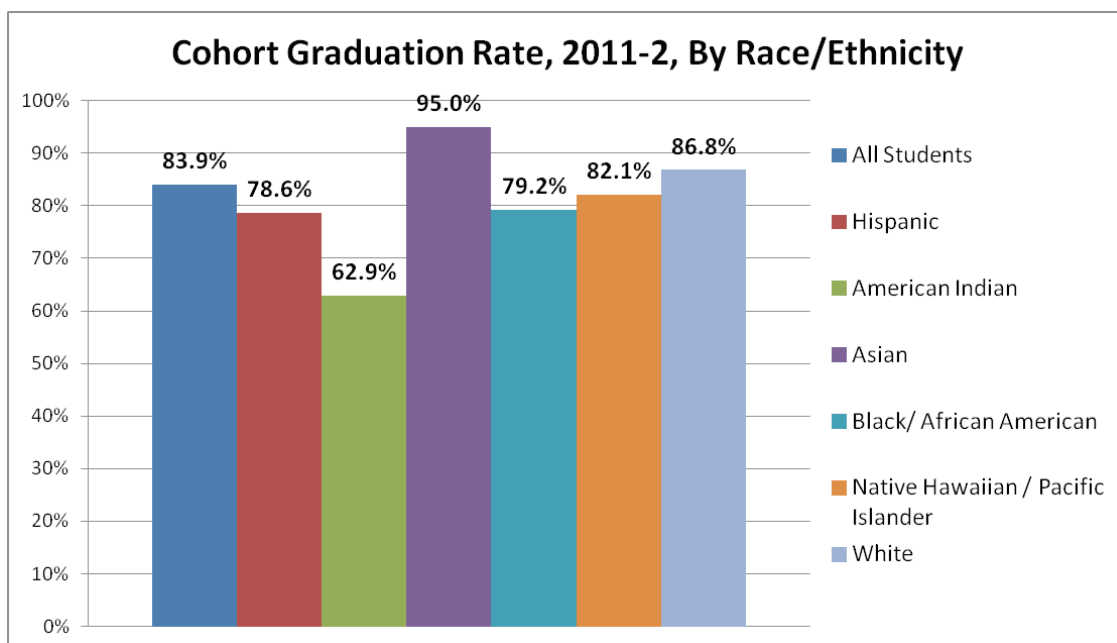
The graduating class of 2010-2011 was the first cohort for which the MT Office of Public Instruction is able to calculate a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. This rate is the percentage of students in a cohort, adjusted for transfers in and out of school, district, or state, that graduate with a regular high school diploma within four years of the student's first enrollment in ninth grade. For the graduating class of 2011-2012, the cohort began ninth grade in the fall of 2008.

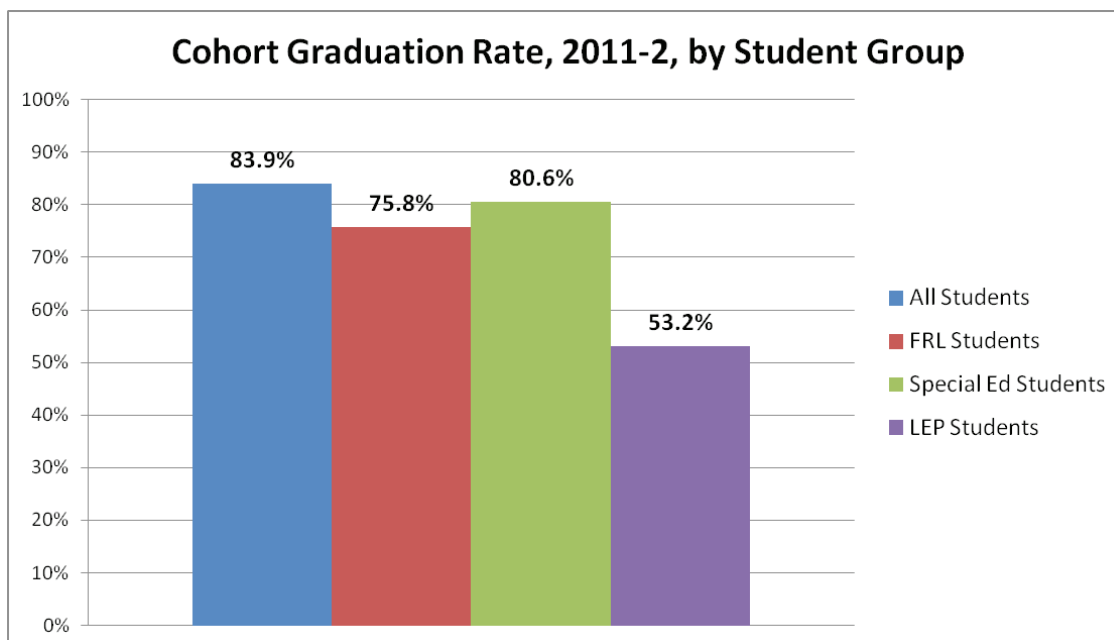
2011-2012 is the second year the OPI has had the data to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort rate. The cohort graduation rate has increased from 82.2 percent in 2011 to 83.9 percent in 2012.

[Frequently Asked Questions about the calculation of the Four-Year Adjust Cohort Graduation Rate can be found on the OPI website.](#)

Dropouts by grade								
	Graduates	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total	Continuing	Cohort rate
<b>All students</b>	9460	298	349	473	396	1692	293	83.9%
<b>--By Race/Ethnicity</b>								
Hispanic	261	13	16	15	19	63	8	78.6%
American Indian	777	113	89	104	59	365	94	62.9%
Asian	114	*	*	*	*	*	*	95.0%
Black/ African American	99	7	*	*	*	20	6	79.2%
Pacific Islander	33	*	*	*	*	*	0	82.1%
White	8177	163	239	347	307	1056	184	86.8%

<b>Special Ed Students</b>	871	9	20	60	48	137	73	75.8%
LEP Students	167	30	30	34	21	115	32	53.2%
FRL Students	3292	199	243	321	249	1012	205	73.0%





## Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

The graduating class of 2010-2011 was the first cohort for which the MT Office of Public Instruction was able to calculate a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. This rate is the percentage of students in a cohort, adjusted for transfers in and out of school, district, or state, that graduate with a regular high school diploma within four years of the student's first enrollment in ninth grade. The OPI can calculate graduation rates for additional years, allowing schools and the public to determine percentages and numbers of students who continue and



receive high school diplomas after the typical four year term. Some students need an additional year to graduate, and it is important to track their progress through Montana's public education system. Accordingly, the OPI has calculated the five-year adjusted cohort rate for the class of 2011.

The four-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2011 was 82.2 percent. An additional 183 students graduated in 2012, making the five-year cohort graduation rate 83.8 percent.

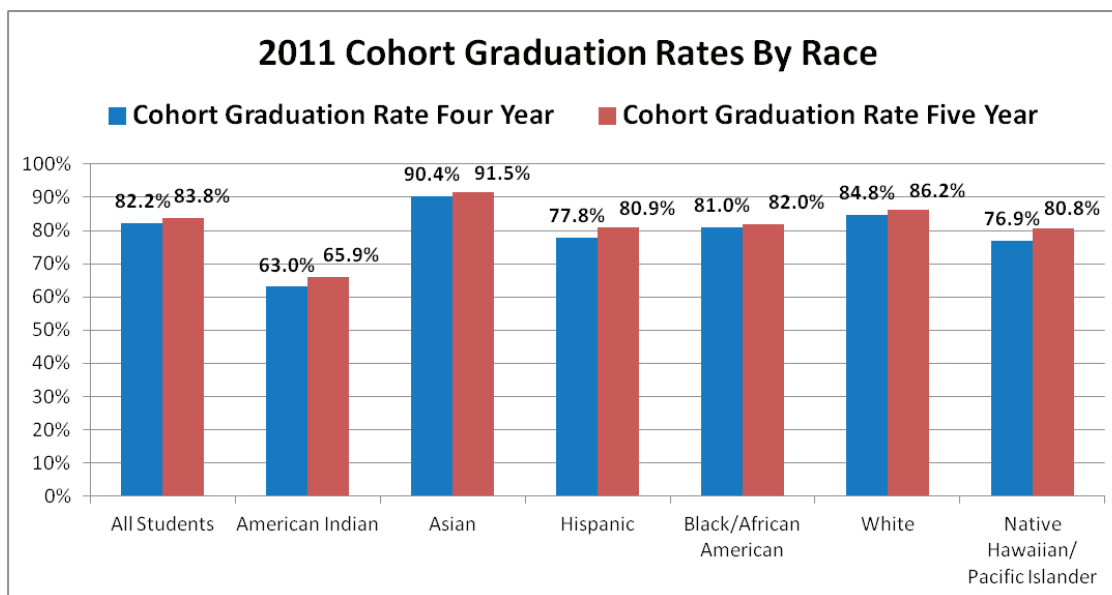
The "Fifth Year Graduates" column includes all students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade 2007-08 school year who received a high school diploma after the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, even if they entered after the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.

	Four Year Graduates	Fifth Year Graduates	Dropouts by Grade						Graduation Rates	
			09	10	11	12	Continuing	Total	Four Year	Five Year
All Students	9445	183	316	486	476	530	58	11494	82.2%	83.8%

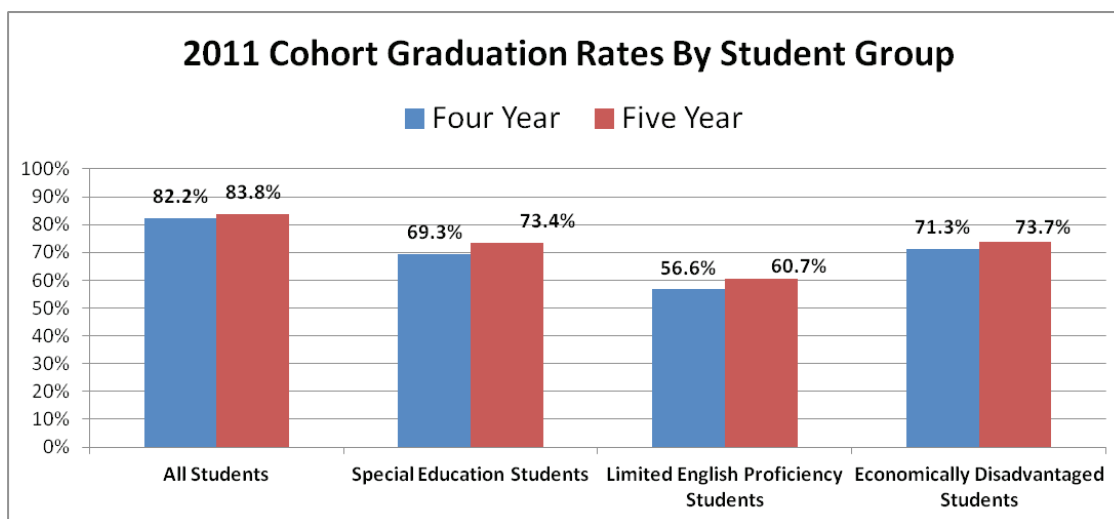
By Race/Ethnicity

American Indian	808	37	131	115	97	78	16	1282	63.0%	65.9%
Asian	85	*	*	*	*	5	*	94	90.4%	91.5%
Hispanic	253	10	13	14	21	12	*	325	77.8%	80.9%
Black/African American	81	*	*	8	*	*	*	100	81.0%	82.0%
White	8198	133	165	346	355	430	40	9667	84.8%	86.2%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	26	76.9%	80.8%

Special Education Students	1034	61	53	109	111	101	23	1492	69.3%	73.4%
Limited English Proficiency Students	294	21	76	46	43	31	8	519	56.6%	60.7%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	3372	114	234	335	305	333	39	4732	71.3%	73.7%







## Technical Notes

Note that “graduate” includes only students earning regular high school high school diplomas in four years or fewer. Students earning General Education Development (GED) certificates are not included as graduates; nor are students who graduate in more than four years, even if the student has an individualized education plan (IEP) that specifies more than four years for completion of graduation requirements. For the calculation of the four year cohort graduation rate, both sets of students here are included in the adjusted cohort (denominator), but are not included in the count of students earning regular high school diplomas (numerator).

The Race/Ethnicity for a student is based on the final enrollment in the statewide information system. For the purposes of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) process, we use a six value race code that does not include a multi-racial option. The Achievement in Montana (AIM) Race/Ethnicity value is used where available. If a student has only the new, two-part question Race/Ethnicity value, it is converted via a crosswalk-back to one of the old Race/Ethnicity values.

A student is included in the Special Education, Limited English Proficient (LEP), or Free/Reduced price lunch eligible (FRL) categories if any enrollment in high school grades (09, 10, 11, 12, and Ungraded high school class) for that student shows a membership in the category.

“Graduates” includes all students graduating on-time or early (Diploma Period values 01, 02 and 03). “Dropouts” include only students with an enrollment end status of 300, 310, 320, 330 or 340 in the final enrollment. “Continuing” students includes all students who neither graduated, nor dropped out, nor have a final status to indicate that they are no longer in the cohort (final enrollment end status of 160, 170, 180, 190, 500 or 510). Most continuing students have an enrollment end status of 100 (continuing enrollment at the same school).

The data above are for students who exited from (had a final enrollment in) a Montana public school. Data from private accredited and state-funded schools was used to calculate cohort entry dates.

For the purposes of student confidentiality, cells with a count under 5 in the statewide graduation report (for both the four and five year adjusted cohorts) have been suppressed.

## **For More Information**

Additional information about the graduation and dropout data for 2012 can be found on the OPI Measurement and Accountability web page:

<http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/Measurement/Index.html>.

For more information about Graduation Matters Montana, go to: <http://graduationmatters.mt.gov>.